

THE TOWER OF FIVE GLORIES

775 party to actions bringing ruin and loss to his kinsmen. No Min Chia or Chinese attributed the manifestations to the magical operations of an enemy, or to the effects of a curse. Opinion was divided between those who credited a human being with remarkable skill, daring and dexterity, and those who believed in the independent action of a malign spirit. The Min Chia are not, of course, acquainted with psychological theories of dissociation of the personality, and so the possibility that one of the members of the guard could have done these things in such a condition did not enter their calculations.

774 Curiously enough the Min Chia do not share the common Chinese belief in were-foxes, a belief which has deeply coloured Chinese and Japanese legend and fiction. Shape-shifting stories are common in Chinese literature, but do not seem to be known to those Min Chia who could not read Chinese fiction. On the other hand a case of shapeshifting was actually reported on March 18th, 1937. The case created much interest among the Min Chia and all those to whom I spoke declared they had never heard of such a thing before. March 18th was a bright windy day such as are common at that season. Boatmen from the eastern shore who came into the city in the afternoon had a strange tale to tell.

They said that when the boats from Wa Shih, a large village on the eastern shore, were about to start in the morning for the Ta Li side of the lake, a tall handsome man took passage on one boat which had a crew of three men. Half way across the lake the boatmen were horrified to see their passenger turn bright red and transform himself before their eyes into a tiger, which thereupon struck down two of the crew, while the third, diving overboard, escaped by swimming to another boat. When asked what had become of the abandoned boat and the tiger, no one professed to know. In

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Chinese folklore the shape shifter is always a fox, not a 774 ●
tiger, and it is a fox who can assume human shape, not a
human who assumes the shape of a fox. This Min Chia
story, however, was positive that the shapeshifter became a
tiger, and everyone denied ever hearing of a case of shape-
shifting before.

Other stories connected with the lake might perhaps be 774
explained if it could be proved that in certain lights mirage 822
effects were possible, but I never observed any such effects
nor heard of others who had done so. It is said that "several"
years ago a phantom ship was observed from the western
shore, apparently leaving Wa Shih, across the lake, about
four miles distant. This ship was much larger than any seen
on the lake, and—a modern touch—had a deck house with
glass windows. No such ship exists on the Erh Hai lake.
Halfway across it suddenly vanished. Another phantom
apparition on the lake was seen eight years ago (1931). A
large and well-attended market was seen from the western
shore, apparently taking place on the still waters of the lake,
far out from the shore. Hundreds of people going and com-
ing could be seen, with horses and mules. After being
clearly visible for some minutes it suddenly vanished. This
did not happen on a day when market was being held in Ta
Li. As there are several market villages scattered round the
shore of the lake the possibility of a vivid mirage cannot be
ruled out. The Min Chia know nothing of mirages and con-
sidered these phantoms to be supernatural manifestations of
unknown import.

Other happenings confirm the fact that the myth making 774
faculty still functions actively among the Min Chia peasantry.
A short while after the war with Japan had begun a miracle
was reported from a temple near Hsia Kuan, at the lower end
of the lake. This temple, on the mountain slope above Hsia
Kuan, is dedicated to the Chinese general Li Ming who with

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Stone horse, mutilated for superstitious reasons.

Erh Yuan Min Chia girl.

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[Face p. 144]

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774 all his army was totally defeated and slain near Hsia Kuan by the Nan Chao King, Ko Lo Feng in the T'ang period. A statue or image of the general stands on the altar in the main hall, the temple having been erected to placate the ghost of this powerful personage who had died a violent death. In the month of February, 1938, following the news that Nanking had fallen, news which did not become generally known till then, the statue of General Li Ming was observed to be bleeding in the right arm. This event aroused great interest; thousands flocked to the temple, where however the statue had ceased to bleed; but the monks of the Kuan Yin temple near Ta Li held a special festival, which was largely attended, to implore Kuan Yin to avert the disaster predicted by such an ill-omened event.

This is not the only instance of the popular belief that graven images may be on occasion animated either by the spirit of the deceased person in whose honour they were made, or by malign ghosts. Not far beyond the north gate of Ta Li city there is a small village called Lu Da, lying on the last rocky slopes of the mountain side, and a mile or so from this village there is the elaborate tomb of a Ming official, approached by a ceremonial avenue of stone figures. These figures are arranged in pairs in the conventional Chinese manner, two horses, two griffins, two lions and finally, nearest to the tomb, two human figures. But the legs of all the animal figures have been cut off, and the heads of the human figures are also missing. The people of Lu Da say that they were advised to mutilate the statues in this way because ghosts were animating them at night. The animals would come down and eat up the growing crops, while the human figures left their pedestals and roamed over the countryside terrifying all they met. Since their heads had been cut off, and the animals deprived of their legs, these hauntings had ceased. A similar belief may well

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- 774 account for the destruction of statuary not only in this region but in other places also.

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774 Lu Da was also the scene of an alleged encounter with wolves, during the spring of 1937. A farmer working on the mountain side found a young wolf cub, and putting it in his sack brought it home as a pet. That night he was awakened by a pounding on the street gate, and when he rose to see who it was, found two wolves, a male and a female, leaping up at the gate. He realised that they had come to seek their cub, and fearing that they would jump the wall, he climbed to the top of the gate and spoke to them, saying, "Wolves, I know why you have come here, and I confess that I did wrong to steal your child. Now, if you will go off a little way so that I may safely open the gate, I will let your cub go, and you may depart in peace." When the wolves heard this, they drew off some way down the street, but remained in sight, watching. The farmer then let out the wolf cub through a crack of the gate, and the reunited wolf family at once made off to the mountain. This story was generally believed as true in all particulars, and created a great deal of interest in the neighbourhood.

Perhaps because they are not a hunting people animals play rather a small part in Min Chia superstition. It has already been remarked that they do not share the Chinese belief in were-foxes, although they agree with the Chinese in considering it to be unlucky to kill wild geese. Swallows, as with most peoples, are also protected by a similar belief.

[147] The Min Chia say that anyone who kills a swallow will go bald. This is curious, as the Min Chia hardly ever suffer from this disfigurement, and in fact have no word for baldness in the language. They have like other peoples a number of superstitions not connected with any definite system of beliefs. For example it is considered unlucky to point at a rainbow. If one wishes to draw the attention of others to a

TRIBES OF LIFAN COUNTY

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The tribes people in Lifan have no social center or community center, not to say theaters, cinemas, or dancing halls. But they have a custom of dancing around the fire. The kitchen is the social center. This is because of the low temperature even during the summer nights, and because they are free only in the evenings. During festivals or on special occasions they all gather in the kitchen of their ruling house, dancing and singing around the fire. A wine pot is passed round and round among the dancers. It is the special duty of a servant of the host and hostess to stand by, whose sole duty it is to fill the wine pot as soon as it gets empty, and the pot seems to be empty all the time.

They are very fond of wine. It is home-made wine, made of barley. Rich or poor have big pots of wine. It is made of the raw materials most accessible to them, and it is one of the few stimulants they have. Some of them drink wine as if they were drinking water. It is the custom to offer wine to people who are starting off on a trip. When we were leaving Ma-o in the Black River region the wife of the T'ou-jen 田人 or leader carried a big bucket of wine, and we were asked to take out our rice bowls and drink with them, for they did not have enough bowls for us. The more one drinks the more courteous one is. Even among the Gie-rung people around Cha-ku-nao the same custom holds.

G. CUSTOMS IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The mountains are precipitous, and Nature is magnificent but fearful. People are living at the mercy of their climatic and geographical environment. Therefore, like all primitive people, they believe that there is a spirit in everything; they are animists. They have heaven gods, earth gods, cow gods, horse gods, water gods, tree gods, mountain gods, and a whole lot of other gods. In some temples they have a conglomeration of gods collected from various sects of religious beliefs and shelter them under the same roof, and worship them in a mass. They are very tolerant about religious beliefs, and they worship everything and every god that comes their way, and they think their gods must be very tolerant of each other too. Their whole lives are chained by superstition. Among people of the Lama faith, twice a year they have the "Dancing God Ceremony" 跳神, once at the end of the year as a farewell to the old year, and once in the early spring to welcome the new year. In August an out-of-door play is given as a thanksgiving to the gods for their harvest.

The center of social activities among the Ch'ang people is the religious teacher. He is present at nearly all occasions, such as when people are sick, when people are moving, when people are happy, and when they want to give thanks. Besides, he is the chief actor at the four most important occasions of the community. First is the ceremony around the beginning of May, when the snow is disappearing and the frozen soil is softening. One sheep is sacrificed to the mountain god for the opening of the mountain, for from henceforth people can go to the mountain for sowing, for gathering fuel, and for digging. The second ceremony is around the beginning of July. It is a ceremony in which

Since the Ch'iang have not yet passed the stage of animism, they believe there are ghosts and gods everywhere. Apart from what has been mentioned before, there are mountain peak gods at the tops of mountains, (pi-rü-tzé); gods of masculine and feminine mountains, (sü-pé-tzé); fortress gods on fortresses, (po-tzé); and local gods in every outpost. Yei-bo is the devil that causes all diseases. The Poison Devil is called is-dü. One who has the Poison Devil in him or her is called Devil Old Woman (dü-ma) if she is an old woman, Devil Girl (dü-tchi) if a young girl, and Devil Man (dü-tze) if he is a man. Besides, all tribal heroes and those who have done virtuous and meritorious deeds for the people are worshiped as gods. 174 •

II. The Ch'iang Sorcerer--Tuan-kung

One who has relations with all ghosts and gods is the tuan-kung. He himself has his special guardian god. All magic instruments of the tuan-kung have active powers. If we want to have a deep understanding of the beliefs of the Ch'iang, it is necessary to study the tuan-kung. 791

According to their legends, the Ch'iang lost a considerable portion of their traditional culture during the period of exile. Even their original belief in the Sacred Forest was restored only after their victory over the Ko tribesmen. After the restoration of their belief in the Sacred Forest, sacrificial ceremonies were inaugurated by outstanding elders. Also, prayers were collected and edited. A committee of priests was organized with its members in charge of different aspects of the sacrifice. After many years, the rites of sacrifice were slightly changed, and the chief priest who read the prayer became tuan-kung. All religious services, exorcism, treatment of illness, delivery from poverty, as well as capping, wedding, and funeral ceremonies were done by the tuan-kung.

During the period when there were only priests, the clothing of the priests was the same as that of the common people. Since the advent of the tuan-kung, there were special attirement and various magic instruments. 791 292

The tuan-kung wears a white skirt (jar-pü), and his topcoat may be a sheep-skin vest or an ordinary garment. It is the same all over Wen-ch'uan and Li-fan. But in Mao-hsien, along Lo-ta-ku, Shui-mukou, Shen-ch'ien-san-kou, and, T'a-hua-san-chai, all tuan-kung wear leopard skin. Besides, in Li-fan there are some special clothes of other styles.

782 two groups five or six times, and then they proceed to sing the follow-
533 ing two verses which again are repeated twice. Before they start to
sing, each group must cheer loudly three times to call for rain, and
the fourth cheer is the response that promises the coming of rain.

Conclusion

771 In the preceding pages, we have made a preliminary survey of the
774 beliefs and practices of the Ch'iang people. Although our subject in-
cludes both, practices are actually the expression of beliefs in practi-
cal life. How the Ch'iang worship and believe in ghosts and gods, how
they are afraid of the evil influences of the ghosts and gods, and how
they rely upon the power of the sorcerers and the function of sorcery,
all these can be seen from their practices. The religion of the cultur-
ally advanced races is often an imaginative and philosophical affair
that attempts to answer the last question in life and the universe. The
beliefs of the primitive people have nothing to do with it. They are
only problems related to daily or practical life. (15) The sorcerer does

15. Briffault, Sex in Religion.

not study theology. He is only an expert in solving practical problems.
Therefore, analyzing the practices of the people is the only way to un-
derstand the primitive beliefs.

In the first section, we have mentioned animism and fetishism, and
regard the Ch'iang beliefs as remaining at the stage of animism and
fetishism. /28/ The names of Ti and Ch'iang were known as early as
during the Yin-Shang period. We may doubt that a people of such a
long history could remain in such a primitive stage. However, cases
like this are not very rare in ethnology. Haven't the Eskimoes of the
Arctic region in America, the Australian aborigines, and even the
most backward Bushmen of southern Africa had a long history? Here
we see that the length of history and the progress, or the lack of pro-
gress, in culture are two different things. Moreover, the existence of
the Ch'iang animism and fetishism is a fact which is recognized by
all observers who do not wear colored glasses. However, animism and
fetishism are special terms in science. How they coincide with the be-
lief in ghosts and gods requires a brief explanation. E. B. Tylor of
Great Britain says that animism is a belief in ghosts and gods. (16)

16. Tylor, E. B., Primitive Culture 5th ed., Murray, London,
1913, Vol. I, p. 424.

771 This statement is right to the point. But the nature of ghosts and
774 gods is quite complicated. Deniker says that the so-called animism recognizes not only that a human being has a soul that can temporarily leave his body, but also that all animals, plants, minerals, and even artificial man-made products consist of two elements, the material and the spiritual. Things like dream, shadow, and imagination further strengthen the primitive people's belief in the existence of ghosts and gods. Furthermore they believe that ghosts and gods can be divided into the good and bad ones, and that sometimes they give blessing and other times trouble. (17) The variety and nature

17. Deniker, Les races et les peuples de la terre, p. 269, 272.

of the gods worshiped by the Ch'iang, as discussed above, coincides exactly with Deniker's statement. There is no doubt that the Ch'iang beliefs belong to animism.

Souls do not necessarily have shapes, but all objects have souls. Therefore, it appears that to worship the soul is to worship the object. And so Deniker regards fetishism as a kind of animism. S. Reinarch says, "The object inhabited by a spirit or soul is a fetish. In the early period of the Roman Empire, there was fetishism but no idol. The earliest God of War is represented by a spear and the God of Heaven a piece of flint." (18) In the same way the Ch'iang use

18. Oeuvres, pp. 143-4.

white stones to represent the various gods, a leather bag to represent the Poison King, and a fork to represent the Hunting God. The Ch'iang have no idolatry. Although there are now some temples with idols, yet this is the result of the Chinese influence. For instance, on the top of the Holy Mountain, "pai-k'ung-ke," at Hsing-shang-chai there were originally only three holy stones. But now there is a sculptured image of god behind the three holy stones. Some Chinese monks also live in the temple. Another example is that the Ch'iang at P'u-ch'i-shih-chai even give up their old tradition of redeeming vows in the Sacred Forest and instead they come to redeem vows at the Sinicized Chiu-lung Temple where there are images of gods like the Mountain King, the Cow King, the Ancestor of River, and the Mother of Earth, but no longer any white stone.

771 We have mentioned above that the tuan-kung is a Ch'iang
774 sorcerer. This is a Chinese term whereas in the Ch'iang language the tuan-kung is called pi. There is no question about the fact that